

***OFFENBACH***

***THE NEW WOMAN***

***(GENEVIEVE OF BRABANT)***

***ENGLISH VERSION***

***BY DONALD PIPPIN***

## Cast of Characters

DUKE SIFROY, our hero, so to speak, who suffers from an undiagnosed malady that prevents his having offspring

GENEVIEVE, his lovely, submissive wife

BRIGITTE, her not so docile maid of honor, companion and confidant

GOLO, an ambitious, thoroughly unscrupulous deputy

VANDERPROUT, mayor of Ham-on-Rye, Golo's reluctant accomplice

DROGAN, a promising young pastry cook

CHARLES MARTEL, Charles the Hammer, a militant overlord

ISOLENE, a lady with a mysterious background

HERMIT, the wise wizard of the woods

GARBAGE, accent on the second syllable, a policeman of questionable competence

PITOU, his even less gifted underling

CHRISTINE, a palace servant

Various ladies in waiting, other less respectable ladies, and miscellaneous citizens of Ham-on-Rye.

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# OFFENBACH

## THE NEW WOMAN

(GENEVIEVE OF BRABANT)

English Version by Donald Pippin

The quaint, colorful, Medieval town of Ham-on-Rye is in a dither of excitement over the Duke's expected homecoming. True, he's been gone for only six days, on a pilgrimage to a nearby monastery – all considered, not what you would call a perilous undertaking. Nonetheless, his return is an event that calls for celebration. He is expected to come back a new man, delivered from the strange malady that has resulted in no off-spring, no heirs to the noble title, the future of Ham-on Rye up for grabs. Now I doubt that the Duke would care to have the matter discussed in public this way, but dare we suggest that the potentate is impotent? Whether he likes it or not, you may be sure that it's already the talk of the town, and it's no wonder that everybody is fervently praying for a cure.

Well, not quite everybody. In fact, there is at least one ambitious soul who would be delighted to see him out of the picture altogether. Keep your eye on Golo, his highly capable, marvelously efficient deputy, who seems rather too eager to wear the Duke's imperial cloak himself, and quite willing to take drastic steps to attain it. And I have to say, I'm not entirely sure that I would trust Vanderprout, the town mayor, either. I'd feel better about the man if he'd just make up his mind.

And what about naïve, young Droган, the pastry cook? Despite his humble status he has wild dreams and ambitions of his own, but along quite different lines. Alas, he is in love with Genevieve, the Duke's ravishingly beautiful -- and it goes without saying, frustrated -- young wife, obviously far above a mere pastry cook, the inhabitant in fact of a different world, almost a different species. Even though his success in winning her heart would appear highly unlikely, I wouldn't rule him out. He has a number of cards up his sleeve, and you never know what a serenade under a lady's balcony window can lead to.

*SCENE: A colorful twelfth century town square in Ham-on-Rye.*

### CHORUS OF INTRODUCTION

**CHORUS:**                   We come from far and wide,  
  Gratified:  
**Our Duke is homeward bound,**  
  Safe and sound.  
  We comb the market place,

Yet detect not a trace.  
What has happened to His Grace?  
Though looking everywhere,  
We see no hide nor hair.

**CHRISTINE:** (*emerging from the palace*)

Madame, shut up inside,  
Weary of waiting  
For news of his return,  
Has sent me to inquire,  
To listen and to learn.

Enough of speculating!  
Who knows and who can say  
If the Duke has gone astray?

**CHORUS:**

You may well wonder who.  
Like you, we haven't got a clue.  
We come from far and wide, etc.  
Though maybe lost or gone astray,  
Let us hope he's on the way.  
We can but hope the Duke is on the way.

**CHRISTINE:**

At last, here comes the mayor,  
Perhaps with news of cheer.

**VANDERPROUT:**

Instead, I come with news  
You may not wish to hear.

**CHORUS:**

What can we lose?

**VANDERPROUT:**

Then lend an ear:  
Councilors in consultation  
On my advice have concurred:  
Though we approve of celebration,  
Wasting money is absurd.

And for this grand state occasion,  
Do I have to say it again?  
Rather than bankrupt the nation,  
Keep it simple, keep it plain.  
Song and dance must go by the board;  
A ball is more than we can afford.

To encourage moderation  
Costly games will be taboo.

**No parade, no ostentation --  
Never pays to overdo.**

**Yet the lavish feast you wanted  
In your honor we'll provide,  
Though of course we take for granted  
You will not be allowed inside.  
Song and dance must go by the board;  
A ball is more than we can afford.  
A ball we simply can't afford.**

**We count on you to do your bit  
To curb a mounting deficit.  
Up to you, Up to you,  
Up to you, up to you, up to you!**

CHRISTINE: No ball? No homecoming celebration? This I do not understand.

VANDERPROUT: A woman is not expected to understand. Ha, ha, ha! These are the express orders of Golo, the Duke's deputy.

CROWD: (*with obvious displeasure*) Golo! The cheapskate!

VANDERPROUT: Let's not grumble. What I don't understand is why the Duke isn't here. He was expected back from his pilgrimage three days ago. Let us pray that his visit to the monastery has accomplished what our wizards, our sorcerers, our astrologers could not, by ridding him of that paralyzing spell inflicted on him at birth by an evil magician. The result, no offspring, no heirs to the title, leaving our beloved, colorful little town of Ham-on-Rye rudderless, floundering, without a ruler.

GOLO: (*appearing*) Without a ruler? What are you talking about?

CROWD: (*with sarcasm*) Golo! The great Golo!

GOLO: And what are you idlers standing around for? I have *not* declared a national holiday.

VANDERPROUT: They were hoping to greet the Duke, who should certainly be here by now.

GOLO: When the Duke does return, you will be allowed to pay your respects. Until then, it's back to business.

VANDERPROUT: Long live Golo!

CROWD: (*unenthusiastically*) Long live Golo!

VANDERPROUT:           **Sorry, folks, it has to be said,  
The state is running deep in the red.  
Song and dance must go by the board;  
A ball is more than we can afford.**

CROWD:                   **We suppose it has to be said,  
The state is running deep in the red.  
Song and dance must go by the board;  
A ball is more than they can afford.**    (*They disperse.*)

GOLO:    The Duke's delay can mean only one thing: his mission has failed, just as I've been saying all along.

VANDERPROUT:   But surely it's still too early to tell.

GOLO:    Better too early than too late. Ham-on-Rye must scout around for a new leader, a man in every sense of the word, and now is the time to start looking. What if the Duke should meet -- heaven forbid! -- with some unforeseen disaster? You have served him for a good many years, have you not?

VANDERPROUT:   And shall continue to do so until his dying day.

GOLO:    Aha! His dying day . . . Do I detect a sly, subtle meaning? Ah, my good friend! How well we understand each other. Ha ha ha! Let me embrace you. We shall work together. Stand by. I envision a glorious future. Naturally, it will include you as well. Till later. (*He leaves.*)

VANDERPROUT:   Either I'm an idiot, or Golo is plotting mischief. There's that gleam in his eye. The Duke has been gone for six days and Golo has redrawn the map five times.

CHRISTINE: (*entering*) Oh, sir! Great news!

VANDERPROUT:   What's this?

CHRISTINE:    The answer to your call for help!

VANDERPROUT:   What I called for was a meeting of all the wise men of the land, the sorcerers, the apothecaries . . . Putting their learned heads together, perhaps they can come up with a magic potion, a philtre, an elixir . . . the latest science.

DROGAN: (*entering in triumph, followed by entourage*) Or a pate!

VANDERPROUT: Drogan, what brings you out of the kitchen?

DROGAN: The cure you have been searching for! My own secret recipe especially designed for the Duke.

### THE ULTIMATE PATE

**DROGAN:** You assembled nobles, friends and neighbors,  
I bring to you the cure that you require.  
Through intensive, long but fruitful labors,  
I've found the match that lights the fire.  
I present my pate.

**CHORUS:** Your pate?

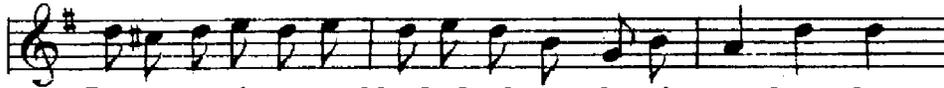
**DROGAN:** On a plate, on display.

**CHORUS:** On display.

**DROGAN:** Take a look at my pate.

**CHORUS:** Your pate, on display.

**DROGAN:**



In my re-ci-pe are blend-ed sal-mon, ham'n steak t- bone,  
Fluffy, light and recommended  
For a magic all its own.

Seasoned with a dozen spices,  
Not only tasty, but apropos:  
Cure for the current crisis  
Lies deep within the dough.

For the Duke it was created  
With secret herbs that contain  
The son and heir he's long awaited,  
The future light of his domain.

In my recipe are blended  
Salmon, ham 'n steak t-bone.  
Fluffy, light and recommended  
For a magic all its own.

**Known to relieve daily stresses,  
Also to spur and inspire,  
Gently it calms and caresses,  
Stoking the flames of desire.**

**Further rewards soon will follow,  
Even when long overdue.  
For after one single swallow  
Age sixty five turns twenty two.**

**If you are eager, ready for action,  
See for yourself, give it a try.  
Here you'll find guaranteed satisfaction;  
It's all up to you, so don't be shy.**

**Old codgers short of breath and queasy  
Will soon sing a different tune,**

**A duet bright and breezy  
As when sung on their honeymoon.  
You wives, come lend a hand;  
Show who is in command.**

**In my recipe are blended  
Salmon, ham 'n steak t-bone.  
Fluffy, light and recommended  
For a magic all its own, etc.**

**The droopy Duke will yet discover  
The spark that never lit before,  
Become the randy Casanova  
That ladies secretly adore.  
Pate, pate, hip hip hooray  
For my own marvelous, miraculous, superb pate!**

**OTHERS: All hail the hero of the day  
And his marvelous, miraculous, superb pate!**

CHRISTINE: A miracle under our very noses.

VANDERPROUT: You're right! This could be the answer.

CHRISTINE: A secret formula discovered all by himself . . .

VANDERPROUT: A mere boy, unversed in the art of medicine . . .

GOLO: (*stepping forward*) Not so fast! This pate may sound promising. But the country is teeming with subversives, who would not hesitate to poison our beloved Duke to further their own unscrupulous ambitions. The pate must be thoroughly examined and tested. A matter of prudence and common sense. Until I can personally verify its safety, I could never allow him to touch it. (*He departs with the pate in hand.*)

VANDERPROUT: (*ever the diplomat*) Fussy old Golo! Cautious to a fault. But as for you, my boy, your skill will not go unrewarded. Name your wish. Ask anything.

DROGAN: I know exactly what I want. Give it to me and I'll be the happiest, richest man on earth!

VANDERPROUT: (*drawing back*) I meant anything in reason . . .

DROGAN: Then let me serve Lady Genevieve as her page.

VANDERPROUT: (*vastly relieved*) Page to the Duchess? Well, well, well! What a smart lad! I think we can afford that. I'll see to it myself. You have given us cause for celebration! When the Duke returns, we can expect wonders! (*He sweeps out, taking everyone with him, except Drogan.*)

DROGAN: Maybe I shouldn't have got carried away. All that stuff about secret magic ingredients – leftovers from last night's dinner. But I was desperate, and it worked! My dream is about to come true -- to be near Genevieve, to serve her, to adore her, even if I can only speak of love indirectly. Ah, her window opens!

### SERENADE

*during which Genevieve appears at her window.*

**DROGAN:**



Un-der-neath your o- pen win-dow with ba- ted breath I stood.

**You appeared for only a moment**

**But I lost my heart for good.**

**Appear, appear at that window again!**

**Appear, appear at that window again!**

**And yet I've no wish to recover**

**That gift from a passionate lover,**

**For I dreamed you found it while asleep.**

**It's yours, my love, to keep.**

**Appear, appear at that window again!  
Appear, appear at that window again!  
Ever faithful and true,  
The heart that I lost now belongs to you.**

**GENEVIEVE:**

**Underneath my open window  
You claim you lost your heart.  
Though perhaps for only a moment,  
I, too, was torn apart.**

**Away! Away from that window, away!  
Away! Away from that window, away!**

**I, too, am faithful and, be it noted,  
A wife steadfastly devoted.  
If your heart perchance I found,  
I'd return it safe and sound.**

**Away! Away from that window, away!**

GENEVIEVE: How strange! Every day for over a week I hear that same sweet voice -- begging to reclaim some lost object. His heart, no less. Why should he suppose that *I* have it? And who is he? As usual, I look around, and see no one . . .

CROWD: (*offstage*) Long live the Duke Sifroy!

DROGAN: (*concealed below*) The national anthem! The Duke is back!

GENEVIEVE: My husband! I suppose I'd better rush down and throw my arms around him.

### **SALUTE TO THE MILITARY**

**CHORUS:**

**You marching men, let the sabers rattle,  
And sing again that martial cry  
That inspires you onward to battle:  
God and country, Ham- on-Rye.**

**Return, return victorious,  
Marching on to the cry so glorious:  
God and country, Ham- on-Rye.  
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!**

*The crowd has entered, making way for the returning Duke, followed by Golo and Vanderprout.*

GOLO: Your Excellency, your adoring subjects are waiting to hear a few words from your lips. Your gratitude for the warm reception, your joy at being home again, a new day for Ham -on-Rye, et cetera.

SIFROY: Me, give a speech? After an exhausting night on the highway, Do I have to?

GOLO: I've prepared one already. You merely have to read it.

SIFROY: In that case, couldn't you perhaps read it yourself -- after I am safely inside. You can say that it expresses my deepest sentiments, my warmest affection -- well, you know the stuff. Good God, relieve me of this cloak! Too hot for it today.

GOLO: (The Imperial cloak! I'll relieve him all right. For me, it's never too hot.)

SIFROY: (*giving Genevieve a peck on the cheek*) Ah, my dear! Good to be home again. You look chipper as ever. I suppose you've missed me. Let us go in together.

VANDERPROUT: We trust that your pilgrimage to the monastery was a success. When can we expect it to bear fruit? Innocent laughter, the patter of little feet . . . As a homecoming present, allow me to present to Madame these adorable little rompers, hoping that she will soon find them useful. Madame . . .

GENEVIEVE: You are too kind.

SIFROY: Very thoughtful. But right now, I'm hungry as the devil. These monks in the monastery have never heard of *haute cuisine*.

VANDERPROUT: Splendid! Our pastry cook has prepared a special treat to enhance the joy of your homecoming. (*All leave except Golo.*)

GOLO: And my own special ingredient will add the finishing touch. It looks exactly like powdered sugar. After disposing of the Duke, I can set to work on the wife, lovely Genevieve. So far she has given me no encouragement -- in fact, quite the opposite. After we are married, she will pay dearly for those snubs and rebuffs, as I continue to rise, higher, higher, higher! There is no limit!

*(Vanderprout returns, followed by Drogan.)*

VANDERPROUT: We've done it! We've done it!

GOLO: Done what? Steady, man. Have you been drinking? Try to control yourself.

VANDERPROUT: Good news! The Duke has eaten. Finished the pate, down to the last bite.

GOLO: And did he enjoy the meal? No ill consequences?

VANDERPROUT: Drogan! Drogan!

DROGAN: Yes, sir?

VANDERPROUT: Congratulations! We owe it to you. The Duke is a new man.

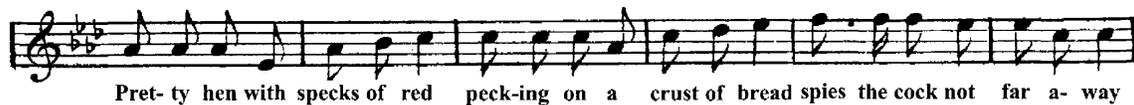
GOLO: Impossible! Ridiculous!

VANDERPROUT: See for yourself!

*(An almost unrecognizable Sifroy enters, bursting with energy, followed by others.)*

## FOWL PLAY

**SIFROY:**



**Ready for a round of play.**

**Bear in mind, the month is May;  
Nature takes a holiday.  
Tremors in the air excite  
Cats and dogs and birds in flight.**

**Cocorico!  
From the barnyard comes the call.  
Cocorico!  
Listen, lovers all!**

**This new vigor in the veins --  
Can it mean Spring again?**

Age is casting off its chains;  
Let it thunder, let it rain.

Picture now the pretty hen,  
Ready for romance again,  
Flirting like a Southern belle,  
O the Leghorn Jezebel!

Cocorico!  
I have caught the vertigo!  
Not the time to say no, no!

Casting eyes upon the cock  
Perched upon a piece of rock,  
Sleek and sprightly, chic and smart,  
Loath to break a lady's heart.

Cocorico!  
Hear the cock return the call.  
Cocorico!  
Listen, lovers all!

This new vigor in the veins, etc.

**SIFROY:**

Though off the charts,  
I feel inspired  
To perform a waltz.  
Oh, stop me before I start  
To turn somersaults,  
My vital parts  
Newly rewired.  
Jaunty and debonair,  
Carefree, come what may,  
My flair I owe --  
Fair is fair --  
To the pizzazz of this powerful pate.

**CHORUS:**

Meet the new man! What a pate!  
Worthy of even the fussiest gourmet.  
Abandon never seen before,  
Thanks to this unprecedented, prize pate.  
Not till today! Not till today! No, no!

**SIFROY:**

This new vigor in the veins --  
Can it mean Spring again?  
Age is casting off its chains;

**Let it thunder, let it rain.  
Co co co co co**

**CHORUS:**                   **On this day of fun and folly  
We shall take the cue from you.  
Led by ladies fair and jolly,  
Love will tell us what to do.  
Bless my soul! Right on cue  
Love will tell him what to do.**

**GOLO:**                   **On this day of fun and folly  
Private matters I'll pursue.  
Gloomy, steeped in melancholy,  
I shall keep my eye on you.  
As my goal I pursue,  
I shall keep my eye on you.**

The scene changes to Genevieve's lovely, intimate boudoir, where her ladies-in-waiting are busily sewing on a surprise present for their mistress while exchanging comments about their favorite topic.

*Scene: Genevieve's boudoir.*

QUARTET AND COUPLETS, *followed by a knock at the door.*

#### **THE LADIES OF HONOR**

**LADIES:**                   **Busy bees, we finish sewing  
On a sheer dressing gown,  
By evening ready for a showing,  
Soft as silk or eiderdown.**

**CHRISTINE:**           **On the day she said "I do"  
She little knew what lay ahead.  
I could drop a tiny clue:  
Disaster when they went to bed.**

**GUDULE:**               **On the night she'll not forget,  
What happened to the festive mood?  
Maybe angry and upset,  
But none can say that she got screwed.**

**LADIES:**                   **Busy bees, *etc.***

**DOROTHEE:**           **Something seems to be amiss,**

**A lethal blow to wedded bliss.  
Who would dare so much as hint  
The potentate is impotent?**

**BRIGITTE:**                   **Home again, her noble lord  
Returns replenished and restored.  
I for one am not so sure  
His wife looks forward to the cure.**

**LADIES:**                   **Busy bees, now we are ready  
To present a gift of cheer,  
Hoping to please, made for a lady  
So despondent, yet so dear.  
Of late despondent, yet so dear.**

GUDULE:   Somebody's knocking.   I wonder who it is.

BRIGITTE:   Then may I suggest you open the door? (*Drogan is admitted.*)

DROGAN: (*very timidly*) If you please, I've come to see Madame Genevieve.

--- Mercy! It's the adorable little pastry cook!

BRIGITTE: I hope he dusted the flour off his face.

---And put away the rolling pin.

--- I hope he brought a cake.

--- Or cherry tarts!

DROGAN: No, no, no! That was yesterday. But I've been promoted. Today I'm her new page -- if she will have me.

BRIGITTE: Dressed like that?

DROGAN: I didn't have time to change.

BRIGITTE: We'll have to help you get ready.

--- Spruce him up a bit.

--- He could be quite good-looking.

--- But so shy!

BRIGITTE: We'll make a man of him.

### THE TOILETTE

BRIGITTE: (*echoed by the other ladies*)

Call him a page? Don't make me laugh.  
He's no more than a paragraph.  
But with a bit of garnishment  
We'll have him ready to present.

A challenge, yes! But we'll attack it  
With bold beret and brazen jacket.  
A lad so sweet, and handsome, too!  
But we shall make a man of you.

So come, my lad, let's not despair.  
You'll learn to swagger, learn to swear.  
We'll overlook the silken curls,  
The features almost like a girl's.

And we'll ignore that grace and poise,  
So out of place in teen-age boys.  
A lad so sweet, and handsome, too!  
But we shall make a man of you.

DROGAN: (*transformed*) Now meet the man to keep your eye on!  
You ladies all, beware, watch out!  
The lamb has turned into a lion,  
Bolder, stronger,  
Out to conquer.

LADIES: An awesome change we've brought about.

DROGAN: Ladies, see what you've created:  
I'm inspired, exhilarated,  
Like a bird in solo flight  
Soaring upward toward the light.

Smoother, cooler, rougher, tougher,  
Set to leap into the fray,  
Have the rigors of a lover  
Put the pepper in the stew,  
Or is it just my new beret?

**Now hale and hearty, hearty, hearty,  
Bold as Alexander,  
Cool as Casanova.  
So take me as I am,  
A lion, not a lamb,  
Or otherwise I say  
Too bad, too bad for you.**

**New attire has made me bolder;  
See me swagger, shrug the shoulder.  
Modesty becomes the mouse;  
I intend to rule the house.**

**Smoother, cooler, rougher, tougher, etc.**

**LADIES:                   A lad so sweet and docile, too,  
                                  Until we made a man of you.**

--- Ladies! It's Madame Genevieve!

DROGAN: Don't let her see me!

--- Then you'd better hide.

BRIGITTE: What happened to the manly swagger?

*(Genevieve enters, deep in thought.)*

GENEVIEVE: Sometimes I wonder if my luck will ever change . . .

BRIGITTE: My dear lady, what's the matter?

GENEVIEVE: Probably nothing . . . but an odd feeling that I can't shake off . . .  
. As if something terribly important is about to happen, something that once again will  
turn my life upside down, and I can't tell whether to laugh or cry.

BRIGITTE: Chase away the black thoughts. Take a look at this.

GENEVIEVE: It's magnificent! Sewed by your own hands. How sweet of  
you! My husband is so fond of silk. But what's this? A young man in *my* room?  
After I've strictly forbidden . . .

BRIGITTE: Oh, I wouldn't call him a man. Not yet.

GENEVIEVE: Poor thing, I think I've frightened him. I believe he's trembling

BRIGITTE: It's those saucy wenches. They've been teasing him.

GENEVIEVE: Then shame on you!

--- He started it.

GENEVIEVE: So shy? So modest?

--- Don't let him fool you!

--- You don't know the half of it.

BRIGITTE: He claims to be your new page.

DROGAN: Oh, please! Let me serve you, let me worship you . . . I want nothing else in the world.

GENEVIEVE: That voice! I am sure that I have heard it before.

BRIGITTE: And I know where. Think back . . . under your balcony window . . .  
(*She hums a bit of the tune.*)

GENEVIEVE: Yes, of course! The nerve! The impudence! This deserves a severe reprimand -- delivered in private. Send the other ladies away.

BRIGITTE: Ladies, you are dismissed. Madame Genevieve wishes to speak with her new page.

--- I don't wonder.

--- I hope she won't be too hard on him.

--- Such a darling!

BRIGITTE: Off with you! (*The ladies leave.*)

GENEVIEVE: So you are the unknown voice that has been serenading me day after day, night after night . . .

DROGAN: How could I help myself? I was drawn to you by a powerful, irresistible magnet.

BRIGITTE: Of course. The hand of fate.

GENEVIEVE: Don't you realize how that could embarrass me?

DROGAN: I never thought of that. Oh, lady, forgive me, punish me. But don't send me away.

GENEVIEVE: There, there, no great harm was done. But hereafter, you must learn to be discreet. Now, now, I didn't mean to scold you. It's not that I was . . . ungrateful. Here, take this purse, for some new attire. My page has to look smart and respectable.

DROGAN: Your page? Oh, say it again! I've never been so happy . . . *(He swoons onto a chair.)*

BRIGITTE: My goodness! So sensitive! He's like a candle burning in the wind. Where are the smelling salts?

GENEVIEVE: I have some right here. Poor dear!

### TRIO

**DROGAN:**                    **Ah, milady! Ah, milady!**  
**Like a queen you reign in splendor**  
**With the sparkle of your eyes.**  
**But I say, take back your money,**  
**For I crave a greater prize.**

**Yes, I hunger for the honey**  
**And the dew of paradise!**  
**As I linger sad and lonely,**  
**Not your gold, I want you only,**  
**And your purse will not suffice.**  
**Ah, the peril in those eyes!**

*(He again collapses onto a chair.)*

**BRIGITTE:**                **Ah, *mon dieu!* A song so tender!**

**GENEVIEVE:**            **What a child! I fear that he's unwell.**

**BRIGITTE:**                **The smelling salts . . .**

**GENEVIEVE:**            **Or maybe brandy. unhappy child!**

**BRIGITTE:**                **You've cast a spell.**

**BOTH:** A fatal spell, a fatal spell . . .

**BRIGITTE:** But look at this, but look at this --  
A soft and silken hand,  
A hand you want to kiss . . .

**GENEVIEVE:** *(then with Brigitte)*



Hand so gen- tle, soft- er, soft-er, soft- er than the fall- ing snow.  
If I press it, surely, surely,  
Surely he need never know.

**DROGAN:** *(by no means unconscious)* Her caress is softer, softer,  
Than the touch of falling snow.  
If I lose her, clearly, clearly,  
I shall not survive the blow.

**BRIGITTE:** There! Pretending all the while . . .  
Observe the eyes, where I detect a smile.

**DROGAN:** I live . . .

**GENEVIEVE:** Though I sympathize, more than ever,  
I must insist, he's not to stay.

**BRIGITTE:** You heard the word, my fair young enchanter.  
Hurry, now be off, on your way.

**DROGAN:** And if I don't? . . .

**BRIGITTE:** No further banter. Be off!

**GENEVIEVE:** Do go.

**DROGAN:** Am I to leave unkissed?

**BRIGITTE:** There is the door.

**DROGAN:** I beg for mercy.

**BRIGITTE:** Quick, be off!

**DROGAN:** No.

**BRIGITTE:** A tug of war . . .

**DROGAN:**                               **Beyond appeal,  
Here I am and here I'm staying.  
I fall, I faint, this time for real.**

*(Again, he faints.)*

**GENEVIEVE:**               **Lord! I fear he's fainted once again.**

**BRIGITTE:**               **Yes, none could call the boy unfeeling.  
But see the down upon his chin,  
A budding beard,  
Oh, so appealing!**

**GENEVIEVE:**               **In one so tender? . . . No, no.**

**BRIGITTE:**                       **Feel it . . . now go ahead.  
No need to wake the dead.  
See for yourself . . .  
A silk so finely spun.  
Go on! Go on! Go on!**

**GENEVIEVE:** *(then Brigitte)*   **Silky down that barely, barely,  
Barely has begun to grow.  
If I stroke it, surely, surely,  
Surely he will never know.**

**DROGAN:**                       **Silky down that barely, barely,  
Barely has begun to grow.  
Now a man, I'm staying  
Though she orders me to go.**

BRIGITTE: Oh, that rascal! Laughing at us the whole time!

GENEVIEVE: Pretending to be so delicate!

BRIGITTE: *(indulgently)* Incurable!

DROGAN: Give me another chance! It's just that I'm not used to being so happy. It's a new life, a new world . . . I'll be good!

GENEVIEVE: *(partly amused)* Brigitte, make him shut up! I am not exactly accustomed to being spoken to in this manner.

*(Sifroy enters gallantly through the window, followed by Golo and Vanderprout.)*

BRIGITTE: Heavens! Your husband! Barging in from the balcony!

GENEVIEVE: Like a lover . . . with entourage. How romantic. (*some-what wistfully*) How unlike him.

SIFROY: My Genevieve! My darling! Come, leap into my arms.

GENEVIEVE: My dear, this is so . . . sudden.

SIFROY: Let me cover you with kisses.

GENEVIEVE: With all of these people watching?

GOLO: (Could I have gotten my ingredients mixed up? This it not the result that I expected.)

GENEVIEVE: No, no, not here in public.

SIFROY: (*with manly bravao*) I'll take care of that.

BRIGITTE: (*aside to Drogan, who has been watching with increasing agitation*) Young man, this is no place for you. Quick march! (*She propels him out of the room.*)

SIFROY: Gentlemen! Why don't you follow their example? There are times when company is not wanted.

GOLO: Of course. You want to be alone with your wife. But may I remind you, there is urgent business to attend to, letters that have piled up during your absence, documents that need signing, hundreds of petitions . . . I've pre-*pared* a portfolio.

SIFROY: Your precious portfolio! Priceless! Irreplaceable! You would guard it with your life, no? (*He tosses it out the window.*)

GOLO: Stop! You're out of your mind! Tossing it into the street . . .

SIFROY: Then run after it.

GOLO: State secrets! Your Excellency! This is madness. (*at the window*) You down there, watch out! Don't touch that portfolio! (*He dashes out.*)

SIFROY: Vanderprout, follow him! Don't let him out of your sight.

GENEVIEVE: My goodness, he will fall!

SIFROY: He's used to landing on his two feet. And we have more important things to attend to. We are alone. The night is ours, with no more interruptions.

GENEVIEVE: You've never talked to me this way before. It must mean that you love me, at least a little.

SIFROY: You never suspected that I had a heart. I've always protected it with a coat of armor.

GENEVIEVE: And now that your armor has been removed . . .

*(Golo returns, waving the portfolio.)*

GOLO: I've got it! And it looks intact.

SIFROY: Golo, is it possible to say it more plainly? I wish to be alone with my wife! A modicum of tact, if you please.

GOLO: I understand, sir, but this cannot be postponed. A dispatch just received from Charles Martel, our overlord.

SIFROY: Charles Martel! Charles the Hammer!

GOLO: Delay is intolerable. He will be here within the hour, and expects to be put up for the night.

SIFROY: If not one thing it's another! Does he think I am running a bed and breakfast?

GOLO: He will expect the best. This chamber, perhaps.

GENEVIEVE: No, no, no, not here! Put him in the purple chamber. Make our excuses.

SIFROY: Yes, say anything. Long journey, tired, under the weather, early to bed . . . tomorrow morning . . . In fact, with all this excitement, the inter-ruptions, et cetera, my stomach feels decidedly peculiar.

GOLO: (Aha! The pate! Finally working.) And where am I to find bedsheets?

GENEVIEVE: In the enameled chest at the foot of the bed.

GOLO: And towels, pillow slips?

SIFROY: To hell with the pillow slips! Just go.

GOLO: No need to be uncivil. *(He goes out, grumbling, and Drogan peers out from the balcony.)*

GENEVIEVE: Why is it so difficult to be alone for a few minutes? You were about to say something?

SIFROY: Was I? I don't remember.

GENEVIEVE: Something about . . . love?

SIFROY: Nothing important.

GENEVIEVE: You mentioned your heart . . . But my dear, you're pale as a ghost!

SIFROY: My heart? It's my liver I'm worried about. I think maybe I ate too much.

#### AFTER PATE

**SIFROY:** An awkward plight! I'm taking a beating.  
I fear I've got the belly ache.  
I took one bite then kept on eating,  
And that, I admit, was my mistake.

Grief and dismay!  
My wretched liver!  
Cursed pate --  
I shake and shiver.  
Damn that pate! Damn that pate!

For gluttony has long been thought  
A deadly vice, so I've been taught.  
I've eaten far more than I ought,  
So now the time has come to pay the price.

**GENEVIEVE:** For gluttony has long been thought  
A deadly vice, so I've been taught.  
A pate made with lots of spice,  
So now the time has come to pay the price.

**SIFROY:** Alone with you, my heart's in a flutter,  
A feeling never known before.  
I try to speak but start to stutter,  
And yet I like it more and more.

Grief and dismay!  
My wretched liver!

**Cursed pate – I shake and shiver.**

**Virility has not been thought  
A deadly vice, so I've been taught,  
I've lingered longer than I ought,  
So now the time has come to pay the price.**

**GENEVIEVE:           It's plain to see he's overwrought,  
                          In disarray, a bit distraught.  
                          But never has he been so nice.  
                          It's happened once, so it could happen twice.**

GENEVIEVE: Do be quiet. Rest a while. I'll call for the apothecary.

SIFROY: I just want to lie down. Give me my cloak, I'm freezing. No, no, it's too hot. *(He casts the cloak aside.)*

GENEVIEVE: Then let me at least . . .

SIFROY: Leave me alone! I must hurry . . .

GENEVIEVE: Dear God . . .

SIFROY: No questions, please! Out of my way! *(He rushes off.)*

GENEVIEVE: *(alone)* Somehow or other, it always seems to turn out this way. Another night of empty dreams. Ah, well . . . Back to my *private* chamber. *(She goes sadly into her own bedroom. Drogan emerges from hiding.)*

DROGAN: My big chance! She needs a shoulder to cry on, and I am the man! The Lord has sent me here for a purpose. *(He sees the cloak and puts it on.)* And this, too, was left here for me. *(He knocks at Genevieve's door as Golo appears, just in time to observe.)*

GOLO: Aha! Hanky panky! Just what I was looking for! The Duke must be informed at once.

DROGAN: *(as the door opens)* To the future of Ham-on-Rye! *(He enters the chamber, and Golo hurries off.)*

Struck down by the gods that control the gastric juices just when it seemed that love was about to burst into flame, Duke Sifroy finds solace and relief in one of life's more sedate pleasures.

*Scene: The Duke's bedchamber.*

## THE CUP OF TEA

**SIFROY:**                   **For the too indulgent diner  
Doubled up in misery,  
Nothing known to man is finer  
Than a soothing cup of tea.**

**Tea after pate,  
So the doctors say.  
Tea after pate:  
Help is on the way.  
As for me,  
There's nothing like another cup of tea.**

**Passing on a bit of wisdom  
Handed down through history,  
Nothing fortifies the system  
Like a sterling cup of tea.**

**When you're feeling less than human,  
Learned doctors will agree:  
Taken with a twist of lemon,  
Nothing beats a cup of tea.**

GOLO: (*rushing in*) My Lord! My Lord!

SIFROY: Ah, my friend, my faithful adviser!

GOLO: You must get up at once, get dressed.

SIFROY: Impossible. I can barely move. That treacherous pate! I never should have touched it. Sleep, that's all I want . . .

GOLO: No time for that. Your wife . . .

SIFROY: She can wait till tomorrow.

GOLO: Do you want to hear the truth?

SIFROY: If there's no alternative. What is it this time?

GOLO: Prepare for a shock. No, no, I can't say it! In your wife's boudoir, less than two minutes ago, a lover lurking in the shadows . . .

SIFROY: Say no more! Name the scoundrel.

GOLO: Droган, your former pastry cook.

SIFROY: Ha! So it was not enough that he nearly killed me with that cursed pate! Now he wants my wife as well.

GOLO: The very moment that you left Madame's apartment so abruptly, he was there on the spot, ready to take your place. With a maniacal cry of lust, he seized the imperial cloak and barged into her chamber without so much as a knock. I saw her fall into his arms. (Not literally true, but a narrator is allowed some license.)

SIFROY: They must both be punished.

GOLO: We are in perfect agreement. Death to them both!

SIFROY: Do we have to go that far? I was thinking . . .

GOLO: You're about to suggest that we send them to bed without their supper? And you call yourself a man? Think of your reputation!

SIFROY: I suppose you're right, as usual.

GOLO: Leave it entirely in my hands.

SIFROY: Your capable hands! Now that we've settled that, I really must get some sleep. It's been a most disturbing evening.

GOLO: Look! A carriage down below, waiting to carry off the guilty lovers. Stand here by the window. Watch, but don't move. They'll not get far. (*As he leaves, a loud clatter is heard from below.*)

SIFROY: It's that lecherous rascal! He's changed his mind and now he's trying to break into the palace. Not content with stealing my wife, he wants to kill me. That's him, right under the window! And me with no weapons. Aha, the chamber pot! (*He empties it out the window.*)

CHARLES MARTEL: (*from outside*) Hell's bells! Who did that? You idiot up there!

SIFROY: Good Lord, his voice has changed.

CHARLES MARTEL: What do you think you're doing?

SIFROY: Oh, sir! My apologies, I'm so sorry . . .

CHARLES MARTEL: Sorry! Don't you know who I am?

SIFROY: But we've barely met . . .

CHARLES MARTEL: Whoever you are, tremble when you stir the wrath of Charles Martel.

SIFROY: Charles Martel! Oh, no! My Lord, I assure you, if I had known sooner . . . (My stomach simply cannot tolerate any more of these surprises.) I'll send someone down immediately to open the door.

CHARLES MARTEL: (*bursting in*) That will not be necessary.

### THE CALL TO ARMS (*Bolero*)

CHARLES MARTEL:



**To make the heathen see the light.**

**Upon a sanctified crusade,  
We pursue a noble mission.  
No, no! Not for plunder, not for trade,  
But to save them from perdition.**

**Up and on your feet! Up and on your feet!  
The word is onward, no retreat  
On to Palestine! On to Palestine!  
The sword of truth again will shine.**

**Fortified to gain the Middle East,  
We cannot afford to fail.  
If forced to kill them all, at least  
Christian values will prevail.**

**Our purpose sacred and sublime,  
We launch a grand invasion.  
With sword in hand, why waste our time  
On reason and persuasion?**

**Beat upon the drum! Beat upon the drum!  
And send them all to kingdom come.  
To Jerusalem! To Jerusalem!  
In war it's either us or them.**

**In waging war expect the worst,**

**While sparing no expense.  
The point is to strike 'em first --  
A clear case of self defense.**

**So rise and hear the call to war  
For greater fame and glory.  
The light of love we must restore  
By means however gory.**

**Let'em burn in hell! Let'em burn in hell!  
To blazes with the infidel!  
Ready for the push! Ready for the push!  
No time to beat about the bush.**

CHARLES MARTEL: So, who is the polecat, the cockroach, the reptile that poured foul liquid on my head? I'll tear down his house and crumble its stones to dust.

SIFROY: A horrible mistake! Sir, the polecat, the cockroach, the reptile -- *C'est moi.*

CHARLES MARTEL: (*grabbing him by the throat*) Then I swear by . . .

SIFROY: Oh, stop! I thought it was . . . bath water.

CHARLES MARTEL: Luckily, my weapon was already in place. (*He whips out his crimson umbrella.*) I never travel without it. A prized heirloom, it was in my family five hundred years before it was invented-- unsoiled till now. But let it pass. It is you I've come looking for.

SIFROY: Me? I don't see how I could possibly be of service. A particularly awkward moment. An unfaithful wife even now galloping off in the arms of a lover, on top of a nasty attack of indigestion. Isn't that enough? No, I don't see how I could possibly take on anything else.

CHARLES MARTEL: Enough! It is I who decides what you can and cannot do. Get up! Tonight we are taking the 8:05 Orient Express.

SIFROY: But prince, where are we going?

CHARLES MARTEL: To the Middle East and the destruction of the Saracen!

SIFROY: Oh, I really don't feel up to that. Not tonight.

CHARLES MARTEL: We've no time to dilly dally. Sound the alarm. Wake up the household. I want the entire army of Ham-on-Rye mustered. Summon your men, and their wives as well. They will want to see them off. (*The door opens; a crowd instantly swarms in.*)

SIFROY: Am I not even allowed time to pack? I'll certainly need sunglasses. And where is my hot water bottle?

CHARLES MARTEL: (*with a grand pose*) Tell them who I am.

SIFROY: Ladies, gentlemen, Charles Martel, our overlord, who I believe has a few words . . .

CHARLES MARTEL: Listen, you varlets. Say goodbye to your wives. Congratulations to you all! You have been selected to die with me on the battlefield. Tonight we take the train to Palestine.

ALL: (*crestfallen*) To Palestine?

CHARLES MARTEL: It leaves the municipal station in less than an hour.

SIFROY: Prince, one minute, please . . .

CHARLES MARTEL: (*magnanimously*) Take fifteen seconds.

SIFROY: Golo!

GOLO: My leige . . .

SIFROY: Take my ring, my insignia, my cloak. Wear them till I get back. Better take the key to my desk as well.

GOLO: (Am I dreaming?)

SIFROY: Till I return, you are in command. And if anyone comes around for the monthly payment on the mortgage, you'll find twenty-five francs on the closet shelf under my flannels.

CHARLES MARTEL: Your time is up. No more of this chit chat.

SIFROY: Just one more question . . . a personal matter . . . Did you catch the vile seducer? What have you done with him?

GOLO: The slippery snake got away. But never fear! The search is on!

ALL: To the station! Eastward ho!

**ACT ONE FINALE**

**GENEVIEVE:** *(rushing in, followed by everyone else)*

**Lord! Is it true?  
Whatever are you saying?  
You leave without delay  
For places far away?  
How long before I see again  
My own dear husband and his men?**

**SIFROY:** **That says it, more or less.  
Despite the nasty weather,  
By Orient Express  
We leave tonight together.**

**CHARLES MARTEL:** **I go.**

**SIFROY:** **Me, too.**

**CHARLES MARTEL:** **They go.**

**OTHERS:** **Tonight we (you) go.**

**GENEVIEVE:** **And I,  
That hear you say goodbye?**

**OTHERS:** **The cad! To leave her high and dry!**

**SIFROY:** **My motives I need not elaborate.  
A wife apparently devoted  
Through some perversity of fate  
Now finds her marriage vows outmoded.  
I see but one solution:  
To punish infidelity  
With death by execution.  
If any are in doubt,  
I'm referring to *you!***

The play is over, death is knocking at your door.  
My own wife so untrue!  
Toc toc toc toc!  
Now she'll betray me no more.

**TUTTI:** Unmerciful! Unmerciful!

**SIFROY:** Here's a wife repudiated --  
You know what that implies, Golo?

**GOLO:** Her demise I've anticipated:  
Beheaded, then thrown into the sea.

**CHARLES MARTEL:** So come along, you cavaliers.  
We have no time to waste on tears.

**GENEVIEVE:** My lord, I pray,  
I pray that you hear me!  
Do not turn away.

**SIFROY:** Simply leave me alone.

**GENEVIEVE:** My dear, my dear,  
What have I done? What have I done?

**SIFROY:** Leave me alone.

**GENEVIEVE:** Have you forgotten all too soon  
That frisky song you sang at noon?  
Pretty hen with specks of red  
Pecking on a crust of bread  
Spies the cock not far away,  
Ready for a round of play . . .

**SIFROY:** Ah, that was before!

**BRIGITTE:** Pretty hen with specks of red . . .  
Peck, peck, peck.

**SIFROY:** Not again! Stuff and nonsense.

**GENEVIEVE:** And the rooster . . .  
Handsome rooster . . .

**SIFROY:** This folderol cannot go on.  
Drag her away. I say, be gone!

*(Genevieve is taken away by guards.)*

**CHARLES MARTEL:**       **Come on, the hour is late.**

**OTHERS:**                       **Fall in.**

**CHARLES MARTEL:**       **Let us not delay. Fall in!**  
                                  **The Orient Express will not wait.**

**OTHERS:**                   **Yes, the Orient Express will not wait.**  
                                  **Away! Away! Away! Away!**

*The scene changes to the Gare de l'est. The train is arriving.*

**TUTTI:**                       **Hear the trumpet calling.**  
                                  **Ready and able,**  
                                  **Steady and stable,**  
                                  **Eager, excited,**  
                                  **Falling like thunder**  
                                  **On the benighted,**  
                                  **Off we (they) go to fight.**

**Hear the call to plunder and pillage,**  
                                  **Doing out duty**  
                                  **Raking in booty,**  
                                  **Terrorizing city and village,**  
                                  **Ever spreading peace and light.**

**March on, march on to Palestine!**  
                                  **Our goal to claim that far distant shore,**  
                                  **Across the dark our light will shine,**  
                                  **Sanctified by the god of war.**

**CHARLES MARTEL:**       **Now the time arrives.**  
                                  **You men, before embarking,**  
                                  **Come, give a kiss in parting.**  
                                  **Look to your wives!**

**WOMEN:**                   **Oh, say it isn't so!**  
                                  **Why must you go?**  
                                  **Brave Charles Martel! Fearless Charles Martel!**  
                                  **Pity the worried wives who say farewell.**  
                                  **After ordeal, bloodshed and strife,**  
                                  **Bring them home once more**  
                                  **To the arms of a loving wife.**

**CHARLES MARTEL:**                **Stifle your fears!**  
   **Stirred by your tears,**  
   **I aim to guard them with my life.**

**MEN:**                                **Now all aboard! Hear the whistle blow.**  
   **We leave tonight to meet the foe.**

**WOMEN:**                            **No, no! Why must they go?**  
   **No, no! Oh, say not so!**  
   **Ah! Long we'll go lonely to bed.**

**MEN:**                                **Ah! Long days of peril lie ahead.**

**TUTTI:**                               **We (they) turn to you, O Charles Martel,**  
   **To guarantee that all goes well.**  
   **Escort our (your) men to war, but then**  
   **Return them (us) safely home again.**

**CHARLES MARTEL:** **They turn to me, to Charles Martel,**  
   **To guarantee that all goes well.**  
   **To escort these men to war, but then**  
   **Return them safely home again.**

**End of Act One**

## **ACT TWO**

After a harrowing escape from the executioner's axe, Genevieve, the accused wife, and Brigitte, her less docile lady-in-waiting, have been reluctantly roaming through the forest for months on end, led by Droган, their ever resourceful, ever devoted page, all the while pursued by Golo and his armed police, Garbage and Pitou, a scruffy looking pair who frankly do not reinforce ones faith in the law. To make life even more uncomfortable, a storm is coming on, with threatening sky, pelting rain, howling winds, and hungry wolves on the prowl . . . I'd better run.

*Scene: The clearing of a forest in the midst of a raging storm; on one side, an abandoned hut, on the other, a steep ravine. Genevieve, Brigitte and Droган hurry in, seeking protection from the storm.*

### XIII. THE STORM TRIO

**TRIO:**                               **Run from the storm  
Raging and roaring.  
Find us a shelter safe and warm;  
Run before the rain comes pouring.  
Come, press onward, swift and strong.**

**DROGAN:**                           **The howling wind . . .**

**GENEVIEVE:**                       **Press onward!**

**BRIGITTE:**                         **The prowling wolves . . .**

**GENEVIEVE:**                       **Press onward!**

**TRIO:**                               **Flee from the storm!  
Press onward! Hurry along.**

**GENEVIEVE:**                       **Where, oh where, my stalwart page?**

**DROGAN:**                           **Question no further, our goal's in sight.**

**BRIGITTE:**                         **He's a leader of men, despite his age.**

**DROGAN:**                           **Tomorrow the sun will be bright.**

**TRIO:**                               **Press onward!  
We'll weather the weather.**

GENEVIEVE: Day after day, week after week, month after month, through wind, rain, thunder and lightning, we've been traipsing through the forest, going nowhere. Forgive me for asking, but . . . are you out of your mind?

BRIGITTE: Or just a lover of the great outdoors?

DROGAN: Hold on a little longer. We're nearly there. The wise hermit of the ravine will have some answers. And here's the ravine, so the hermit can't be far away.

BRIGITTE: A friendly chat with a hermit! Perhaps he'll offer us some roots to gnaw on. We've come all this way for that?

DROGAN: He will tell us what to do next. Be patient, we're near the end.

BRIGITTE: The end . . . meaning what? Devoured by some wild beast, or dead of pneumonia?

GENEVIEVE: Or of slow starvation? I can't believe this. What did I *do*? Why did my sweet husband cast me out into the cold?

BRIGITTE: Casting you into the sea was what I heard him talking about. After your head was chopped off.

DROGAN: But we managed to escape. That's the thing to keep in mind. And for five months we've stayed two steps ahead of Golo. From the very beginning he's been out to get you and he's not about to let go. Searching, hunting you down night and day, ever since your husband was shipped off to Palestine.

GENEVIEVE: What does he want?

DROGAN: Beats me. But whatever it is, it's not good. And unless I'm mistaken, his armed police are closing in this very minute. Quick! Follow me!

BRIGITTE: Down that steep precipice?

GENEVIEVE: It makes me dizzy even to look at it.

DROGAN: Don't worry. Nobody knows about it but me.

BRIGITTE: Some comfort after we've broken our necks.

GENEVIEVE: And me with a cold coming on. (*A violent sneeze*)

DROGAN: Come along! I'll go first, to catch you at the bottom. (*He does so.*)

BRIGITTE: Not me! I don't know about you, but I know where *I'm* going. This little hut will at least keep us dry, and it looks deserted. Come on!

(*The two of them enter the hut, just in time to evade the armed police who stagger in to a military tune, possibly a little the worse for drink.*)

#### XIV. THE ARMED POLICE



To hell with halls of Mon- te- zu- ma! To hell with shores of Tri- po- li

**GARBAGE:** The call is out to save the nation.

**PITOU:**                               **And I reply, “No way, not me!”**

**GARBAGE:**                       **On night patrol, we comb the country**

**PITOU:**                               **To oversee and overhear.**

**BOTH: (alternately)**               **In nick of time**  
  **We spot the crime,**  
  **But who are we to interfere?**  
  **In nick of time**  
  **We spot the crime,**  
  **And just as quickly disappear.**

**GARBAGE:**                       **We stay away from rougs and rowdies,**

**PITOU:**                               **The guys that murder, rape and rob.**

**GARBAGE:**                       **In hot pursuit of tramps and beggars**

**PITOU:**                               **You’ll find us right there on the job.**

**GARBAGE:**                       **Compelled to deal with pimps and pirates**

**PITOU:**                               **And other folk of ill repute,**  
  **We lock ’em up**  
  **Where they belong,**  
  **Unless we get to share the loot.**  
  **We lock ’em up**  
  **Where they belong,**  
  **Unless we get to share the loot.**

PITOU: D’you wanna know what I really, truly believe?

GARBAGE: (*loftily*) Nothing would interest me less. (How much longer must I stoop to the level of my intellectual interiors?)

PITOU: We’re never gonna find that dame.. And why? Because she’s outta the country by now. Or maybe dead. A tasty snack for a hungry wolf.

GARBAGE: And why do you think it matters what *you* think? It’s what the boss thinks that matters. And what *really* matters is what he’ll do to us if we come up empty-handed.

PITOU: I don’t even wanna think about it.

GARBAGE: You should have thought about it sooner, when we were earning a decent, disreputable living. Nice, pleasant indoor work, under the counter deals, shell games, a little pimping, a little blackmail on the side. Oh, no! You had to blow it all to smithereens.

PITOU: Go on, rub it in. But I got feelings same as you. Don't you think I miss the good old days? Warm, comfortable taverns, the smoky clubrooms, the bookie joints, the bawdy houses --- it makes a man wanna cry.

GARBAGE: (*with infinite patience*) Come, come, mustn't indulge in neuralgia.

PITOU: And just between you and me, it don't feel right ganging up on a weak, defenseless woman. What's she ever done to us?

GARBAGE: You and your conscience! It's too late now for conjunctions. Besides, you fail to grasp the first maximum of warfare: find an opponent who's weaker than yourself.

PITOU: All right, so I ain't educated like you are.

GOLO: (*offstage*) Vanderprout, come on, get a move on.

PITOU: Jeez, it's the boss! Looks like he's come spying on *us*.

GARBAGE: I'll handle this. No cause for constipation.

GOLO: (*entering, with Vanderprout*) Well, well, well! Look who we have here! (Damned nuisance, too!) Pitou, Garbage.

GARBAGE: (*correcting him, with some hauteur*) Garbage, Pitou.

GOLO: So what have you to report? Have you found her yet?

GARBAGE: We're regressing, sir. Getting closer by the day.

GOLO: What about that little hut over there?

PITOU: Don't look like nobody's home.

GARBAGE: (*silencing him*) Ahem! It's been thoroughly searched, combed inside out. No sign of human habituation.

GOLO: Well, keep looking. Don't let me detain you. But don't get too far away. I may be needing you later on to give you instructions -- *final* instructions.

PITOU: You're the boss.

GARBAGE: Take no offence at Pitou, sir. Crude, yes, but not incontinent.  
(with a smart salute) Ay, ay, sir. (They leave. Golo turns to Vanderprout.)

GOLO: Blithering idiots! And what's eating you? Why that hangdog look on your face? I trust you're not having second thoughts about the master plan.

VANDERPROUT: Heavens, no! I stopped thinking months ago. But what if it doesn't turn out the way you hope? What if the Duke returns?

GOLO: How can he return? He's dead. Slain in Palestine -- I have it on good authority.

VANDERPROUT: Are you sure?

GOLO: Well, not entirely. The truth is, my information is based on a dispatch that I composed myself. But that's exactly why we've come to this remote spot in the woods: to find out what's really going on.

VANDERPROUT: Looks to me like not much of anything's going on. Why here?

GOLO: Because here is where the hermit lives. The wise wizard of the woods.  
(The hermit appears) Look! He already knew we were coming!

## XV. THE HERMIT

**HERMIT:**

**I am the hermit, seldom seen  
Away from this remote ravine  
Where I pursue my own routine,  
At home to neither king nor queen  
Who choose to visit my ravine.**

**I am the hermit, seldom seen  
Away from this remote ravine,  
This desolate, remote ravine . . .**

GOLO: Speak, hermit!

HERMIT: What do you want to know?

GOLO: The Duke Sifroy who left five months ago for Palestine . . .

VANDERPROUT: Is he dead or alive?

HERMIT: Ha, ha, ha, ha!

GOLO: What's the joke?

**HERMIT: A turn of events that cannot but amuse –  
A fox like you taken in by a ruse.**

GOLO: What's this? Taken in? What do you mean?

**HERMIT:** *(spoken with melodramatic emphases)*

**The night the Duke and Charles Martel  
Set out for war and said farewell,  
The track was called, the whistle blew;  
The train took off without the two.**

**Instead, these valiant warriors go  
To Charles Martel's superb chateau,  
Where nightly revels, food and wine  
They much prefer to Palestine.**

**I lift the curtain. Come, behold  
The truth of what you've just been told.**

*(With rolling of eyes and mysterious hand gestures he extends a wand.)*

GOLO: *(gazing in astonishment)* Those lowdown hypocrites! This is what they call fighting a crusade.

VANDERPROUT: Doesn't look like a battlefield to me.

GOLO: More like a drunken orgy.

VANDERPROUT: Women, too!

GOLO: Look at them! Sprawled out on the floor. Feasting, carousing . . .

VANDERPROUT: *(helpfully)* Maybe dead and gone to heaven.

GOLO: They don't look dead to me. *(lashing out at the hermit)* You fraud! You creepy wizard of evil! Crawl back into your hole, and stay there!

*(The hermit also leaps into the ravine)*

VANDERPROUT: So much for your ambitious plans. What are you going to do now?

GOLO: Proceed exactly as before, except for one slight adjustment. Instead of murdering Genevieve, I'll marry her.

VANDERPROUT: But her husband is still alive. You saw it yourself.

GOLO: Nobody knows that but you and me, and if you're smart you'll keep your mouth shut.

VANDERPROUT: But what about your own wife? I was under the impression .

..

GOLO: Totally irrelevant! It was a long time ago and I've not seen the hussy in years.

VANDERPROUT: I have to hand it to you -- you're amazing. But marry Genevieve?

GOLO: Simple enough, but we've got to find her before her husband gets back. *(A loud sneeze is heard from inside the hut.)* Aha! That sneeze! I would know it anywhere. She's inside that hut. Come on! We'll drag her out. *(He charges into the hut, then emerges with Genevieve and Brigitte in tow, both of them atremble.)*

VANDERPROUT: *(He's a maniac, and I'm in quicksand up to the neck.)*

GEN. & BRIG. Oh, sir, please, please have mercy!

GENEVIEVE: We just want to live.

GOLO: *(indicating Brigitte)* Vanderprout, get this woman out of my way. Go find my two police. And stand by. Listen for my signal,

VANDERPROUT: What signal?

GOLO: Two hand claps. Like so. And you come running.

VANDERPROUT: Just as you say. *(to Brigitte)* Come with me.

BRIGITTE: You'll have to catch me first. Drogan, Drogan! . . . *(She leaps into the abyss.)*

GENEVIEVE: Brigitte! Stop!

GOLO: Too late. That abyss is five thousand feet deep. Off with you, Vanderprout. And don't forget the signal. Two claps.

VANDERPROUT: *(leaving)* *(Up to the eyeballs!)*

GENEVIEVE: What do you want with me, you monster?

GOLO: A little cooperation, that's all. Yes or no?

GENEVIEVE: No!

GOLO: Beware! I warn you!

GENEVIEVE: Go ahead, strike me. What's stopping you?

GOLO: (Maybe I'm not taking the right approach.)

GENEVIEVE: You don't dare. But I do! Take that, you scoundrel. (*She strikes him; as he spins around, she strikes him on the other cheek.*) And that! (*Vanderprout instantly reappears, with Garbage and Pitou.*)

VANDERPROUT: Aha! The signal. Two claps.

GOLO: With your own hand you have sealed your doom.

GENEVIEVE: It was worth it.

GOLO: I will not be insulted. Guards! You know your duty. There's no need for me to repeat it. I leave her in your hands. Report to me when you've finished. Come, Vanderprout, we have business elsewhere, and time is of the essence.

VANDERPROUT: (How did I let myself get sucked into this?) (*They leave*)

## XVI. TRIO

**GARBAGE:** (*echoed by Pitou*) **Prepare to die; you plead in vain.  
Your crude assault was indefensible,  
But now if you'll at least be sensible  
You'll die and hardly feel the pain.**

**GENEVIEVE:** **Please, oh please, sir! Show a bit of pity.  
Spare a child whom some consider pretty.**

**GARBAGE:** **Don't look at me. I'm instructed to kill,  
Though much against my will.**

**GENEVIEVE:** **O lord! I'm feeling sick.**

**GARBAGE:** **But we'll make it clean and quick.**

Club or sword, take your pick.

**GENEVIEVE:**                   O mama! O mama!  
O my mamama! O my mamama!  
Save your unfortunate daughter.  
Omy mamama! O my mamama!  
Led like a lamb to the slaughter.  
By the sword, so they said,  
Or a blow to the head.  
By the sword? No, no, no!  
Or the club? Ooh, la, la!  
O my mamama! O my mamama!  
I do not want either one.  
No, no, no, no!

**BRIGITTE:** *(from her hiding place)*

Help is on the way. Just hold steady.

**GENEVIEVE:**                   That voice I know . . .

**BRIGITTE:**                   Depend on me, and play for time.  
Your page is ready,  
Waiting close at hand to set you free.

**GARBAGE & PITOU:**           Come on!

**GENEVIEVE:**                   Allow me first to say a prayer.  
In my despair, at least a final prayer . . .

**GARBAGE & PITOU:**           As you please.

**GARBAGE:**                   Then may you rest . . .

**PITOU:**                       . . . in peace.

**GENEVIEVE:**   Hermit, hermit dear! Hermit, hermit dear!  
Pleading, I call on the master.  
Hermit, hermit dear! Hermit, hermit dear!  
Save me from total disaster.  
Knock 'em flat.  
After that,  
Make 'em pay  
Tit for tat.

If inclined,

**Strike 'em blind.  
Go ahead,  
I don't mind.  
Hermit, hermit dear! Hermit, hermit dear!  
Finish what they have begun.  
Make 'em pay! Make 'em pay!**

**GARBAGE & PITOU: Hermit, hermit hear! Hermit, hermit hear!  
This we can handle alone.  
Stay away! Stay away!**

*(Drogan with Brigitte appears, dressed as the hermit.)*

DROGAN: Mumbo jumbo, abracadabra!

GARBAGE & PITOU: The hermit! *(The hermit touches them with his wand.)*

GARBAGE: Ow! You struck me!

PITOU: Me, too!

DROGAN: Not I! It was your conscience, waking up after a long sleep.

GARBAGE & PITOU: It hurts!

DROGAN: That was only the first light tap. Shame on you! Persecuting, threatening an innocent, unprotected young lady! Wait till the serpent of remorse starts to eat at your vitals. Wait till the wrath of Jehovah condemns you to eternal fire, *after* the hand of human justice has landed its implacable hammer on your miserable, worthless heads. *(to Gen. & Brig.)* Come with me, poor child.. They will not run away. There is no place for them to hide. *(He leads them off.)*

GARBAGE: Pitou! You are beneath contempt.

PITOU: Garbage! You're the scum of the earth. Got any more of that brandy?

GARBAGE: You finished it off half an hour ago. Frankly, you disgust me.

PITOU: Frankly, you give me the creeps.

GARBAGE: We are both monsters.

PITOU: I'm even worse than you. I don't deserve to live.

GARBAGE: No, no! Not even you could be more contemplative than me. Whadda ya know? There does seem to be a drop or two left. You take it.

PITOU: Oh, no! You need it more than me. I wanna kill myself.

GARBAGE: And add suicide to your catacomb of crimes? How could I let you do a thing like that? I've got a better idea. I'll kill you . . . then you kill me.

PITOU: (*puzzled*) I'm not sure that will work. I know what . . . We'll die together, like soldiers.

GARBAGE: (*with heroic solemnity*) Like brothers. In death we shall form a perfect onion. (*They embrace, then separate, sword in hand, turn to face each other, and simultaneously fall in a dead faint, as Drogan returns with the ladies.*)

DROGAN: (*Calmly surveying the bodies*) Both dead. Just as they deserve. But now we've not a minute to lose. Golo will not give up so easily. I'm going to Paris to find the Duke, your husband.

GENEVIEVE: But he's not in Paris, he's in Palestine, fighting the Saracen.

DROGAN: The hermit tells me otherwise. As we speak, he is reclining in the luxurious chateau of that cowardly lion, that peerless hypocrite by name of Charles Martel, feasting, drinking and cavorting with a bevy of disreputable ladies.

BRIGITTE: Enjoying himself at a party. Hm! Smarter than I gave him credit for.

DROGAN: Quick! A lock of your hair!

GENEVIEVE: What for?

DROGAN: To give to the Duke.

GENEVIEVE: After what he did to me? Never!

DROGAN: But I'll need proof of your identity, and perhaps a reminder of the lovely, innocent wife that he cast to the wolves. Ah, well. One lock is as good as another. (*He snips a lock from the head of Garbage.*) First, though, let me take you away from this grim location. Some place where you can forget this grisly ordeal. Come. (*He leads them off.*)

PITOU: Garbage?

GARBAGE: (*reviving*) Did you say something? Can't you see that I'm dead? (*Gives Pitou a punch*)

PITOU: *(also reviving)* You dare strike a dead man? Have you no respect?  
*(returning the punch)*

GARBAGE: Pitou! You're alive!

PITOU: Garbage! You're alive!

BOTH: A miracle!

Pitou: *(in awe)* A bloody miracle . . .

## **BOLERO**

**Cry Hallelujah!  
Raring to go!  
Say, buddy, here's to ya:  
On with the show!**

**Wonder of wonders!  
Back from the dead.  
So up on your toes  
And full speed ahead.**

**Stretching, bending, human again.  
Skipping, hopping, feeling no pain.  
Living, breathing – who's to complain?  
Celebrate! Pop the champagne!**

**Ding, ding a ling.  
Ding, ding a ling.  
La la la la!**

**Cry Hallelujah! Etc.**

The scene changes to the magnificent, brilliantly lighted chateau of Charles Martel, near Paris, where the two presumed leaders of the crusade to the Middle East, having hopped off the Orient Express as it was leaving for Palestine, are enjoying the easy life -- a rousing party that has evidently been going on for several months. The party goers are showing no signs of fatigue.

*Scene: a grand salon in the chateau of Charles Martel. A party is in progress.*

## XVII. CHORUS.

**Sing on, sing on, lively ladies!  
Toast the good life with glass in hand.  
Sing on, sing on, lusty soldiers!  
Spread the good word throughout the land:  
Revel while you may, and strike up the band.  
Sing on! Drink up and sing on!**

**To Rose the rare Castillion, (-stillion, -stillion, -stillion)  
Out in the world a great success. (-cess, -cess, -cess)  
Her smile is worth a million, (million, million, million)  
Though I am told she sells for less. (less, less, far less)**

**And to doleful Dorothea, (-thea, -thea, -thea)  
Whom I fail to understand. (-stand, -stand, -stand)  
I've frankly no idea (-dea, -dea, -dea)  
Why she believes herself so grand. (grand, grand, grand)**

**To Gretchen, so Germanic, (-manic, -manic, -manic)  
Beautiful, blessed with brawn and brain, (brain, brain, brain)  
Though somewhat prone to panic (panic, panic, panic)  
Unless plastered with champagne. (-pagne, -pagne, -pagne)**

**Sing on, sing on, etc.**

BRADAMANTE: To our host, the formidable warrior, the tireless crusader, the stalwart defender of the faith, Charles Martel, known throughout the civilized world as Charles the Hammer. May I call you Charley?

CHARLES MARTEL: No, no, no! Call me Bunny.

BRADAMANTE: To Bunny! And to his honored guest, Duke Sifroy, the pride of Ham-on-Rye. While their subordinates are slugging it out with the Saracen in far away Palestine, these two brave nobles have sacrificed their own thirst for glory on the battlefield by graciously enhancing our party. After all, we poor ladies, abandoned by young warriors for miles around, need all the con-solation we can get.

CHARLES MARTEL: (*with gallantry*) Ah, but here we engage in an even more challenging combat. It is your own hearts that we set out to win. *You* are the Saracen, *we* the Infidel.

## XVIII. ROUND OF THE INFIDEL.

**CHARLES MARTEL: To battle with the Saracen  
We headed off to war,**

**But on the way a change of plan  
Has brought us to my door.**

**The brightest beauties known to man  
Arrive to weave a spell.  
They play the role of Saracen  
And we the sinful Infidel.**

**TUTTI: We (they) play the role of Saracen  
That spurn the sinful Infidel.**

**SIFROY: Upon a less austere crusade,  
We lift a glass and revel.  
What matter if the war's delayed  
If we can roar and raise the devil?**

**Though ever since the world began,  
They've said that war is hell,  
With soft caress, the Saracen  
Have overcome the Infidel.**

**ISOLINE: (*rising up, masked*) I get the last verse!**

**And some fine day when you return  
Home safely to the fold,  
You may not be the first to learn  
Some tales are best untold.**

**Left on her own while you were gone,  
You wife could now have lots to tell  
About the charming Saracen  
And the obliging Infidel.**

SIFROY: Who is that mysterious lady behind the mask? A newcomer, I believe. Whoever she is, I'd like to know her better.

CHARLES MARTEL: You could start by getting her to remove the mask. Go ahead, I dare you! I have my own beauties to pursue. (*He turns to another lady.*)

SIFROY: (*shyly approaching Isoline*) Lady, pardon my presumption. Now don't take offence, but – oh, please! Let me see your face.

ISOLINE: (*Removing the mask*) You need but ask.

SIFROY: Ah! Ravishing! Imagine concealing a face like that even for a minute! With such assets you could go far!

ISOLINE: Sir! (*glancing around the room*) Perhaps you are confusing me with certain mercenaries out to peddle their so-called assets to the man with the best offer.

SIFROY: Ah! The age that we live in! These degenerate times!

ISOLINE: Well, I don't mean to judge so harshly. A woman does not have all that many alternatives.

SIFROY: Oh, very true, alas! All too true!

ISOLINE: The fact is, I am married already,

SIFROY: Married?

ISOLINE: Yes, but I fear in name only, to a gentleman unworthy of the name. Years ago, he abandoned me without so much as a goodbye, after he had finished squandering every penny of my fortune.

SIFROY: The scoundrel! He has probably come to grief by now.

ISOLINE: On the contrary, I hear that he has done exceedingly well. By playing on the foolish trust of some ridiculous local Duke, who seems to be the laughing stock of the county, he is now in the process of conning the poor dear out of his Dukedom *and* his wife.

SIFROY: Ha! That gullible Duke must be a complete ass. Somebody ought to knock some sense into his head. I wonder if it's anybody I know.

BRADAMANTE: Ladies, gentlemen, for your amusement, three of our guests have expressed a desire to tell you about their lovely native land, the Tyrol, also known as Switzerland, a land of snow-covered mountains, cowbells, and something called milk chocolate, located, I believe, in the heart of Africa. This will be followed by a farandole, where everyone willing to throw caution to the winds is invited to join in.

## **XIX. TYROLIENNE**

**With dawn the day's begun,  
Waken with the rising sun,  
Then off to mow the hay.  
As the meadow flowers glisten,  
For a moment, stop and listen:  
Hear the song for work or play.**

**La oll lli hi! Tou i!**

**My Tyrol, O land of bluer skies,  
Edelweiss, and birds and butterflies,  
Land I love, for there my pleasure lies.  
Land of smiles, land of dreams,  
Waterfalls, mountain streams.  
My heart and soul  
Long for my fair Tyrol.**

**As evening shadows loom.  
Weary workers head for home,  
And birds come home to nest.  
From the field both saint and sinner  
Heed the welcome call to dinner,  
Man and nature now at rest.  
La oll lli hi! Tou i!**

**My Tyrol, O land of bluer skies,  
Edelweiss, and birds and butterflies,  
Land I love, for there my pleasure lies.  
Land of smiles, and of dreams,  
Waterfalls, mountain streams.  
My heart and soul  
Long for my fair Tyrol.**

## **XXI. FARANDOLE.**

**Take your places for the dance!  
Here is room enough for all.  
Out for laughter and romance,  
Join the crazy carnival.**

**Take your places,  
Join the crazy carnival.  
Mask your faces  
For a mad free for all.**

**For a ball in masquerade  
Leave the fighting forces.  
Share the banquet table, laid  
For a dozen courses.**

**(Off to fight a noble war,**

**You have made a small detour,  
Leaving horror, blood and gore  
For the pleasures of l'amour.)**



Ooh la la! Play with fire! Lov-ers have the right of way. In the land of de-sire, ev-'ry day's a hol-i-day

**(Live for just today.)**

**CHARLES MARTEL:** Caught in the spell of beauty's stealthy charms,  
Willingly we lay down the soldier's arms.  
A sweeter challenge we pursue,  
And the driver's reins we hand to you.

**ROSAMONDA:** Swept in the swirl of delight,  
Waste no time on sorrow.  
Sleep by day, play by night,  
Start again tomorrow.

**ARMIDA:** But love is a demanding game,  
Seldom won by bluffing.  
You lovers, come, take aim  
And shoot for all or nothing.  
The battle lines are drawn;  
The game goes on and on.

**TUTTI:** So sing along, my friends,  
Have a mad, merry fling.  
Come, let the rafters ring  
And burn the candle at both ends.  
Take a chance!  
The devil leads the dance.

**Ooh la la! Play with fire, etc.**

**MESSENGER:** (*rushing in*) Duke, a young man-of-arms is at the door,  
demanding to speak with you.

**SIFROY:** Can't you see that I'm busy? Tell him to come back in the morning -  
- not too early.

**MESSENGER:** But he has been galloping all day. He's covered with dust. He  
says that it is urgent.

**SIFROY:** Oh, well. Show him in. Am I to have no time to call my own?

DROGAN: (*entering*) Sir, my respects to you and the company. I bring sad news from Ham-on-Rye. Your order has been carried out. Your wife is dead.

SIFROY: My faithless wife! Have you proof?

DROGAN: A lock from her own hair that she clipped herself as she breathed her last. "Give it to my husband," she said. "Tell him that I am gone, and that I shall be waiting for him."

SIFROY: Let's hope that she'll have a long wait. But this lock of hair can't be hers. It's gray!

DROGAN: Transformed by grief, these once golden locks have turned to lead.

## XXII. SONG OF THE LOCK

**DROGAN:**

**Though Genevieve was blonde,  
The strands have now turned gray.  
No, no, you mustn't allow  
The truth to spoil your play.**

**The gold has turned to lead  
Because of fear and shame.  
Do not suppose for a moment  
You're the least bit to blame!**

**But take the former golden locks,  
And then shed a tear  
For all that's left of innocence  
That you chose to smear.**

**Preserve the drab and lifeless locks,  
But pause now and then,  
Sadly recalling the colorful ringlets  
She wore back when.**

**Those comely, curly locks  
So admired by all the world!  
Shattered by horror and shock,  
Her lovely curls came uncurled.**

**Privation and despair are bound to take their toll;  
Fear and foreboding are forces she could not control.  
But take the former golden locks,  
And then shed a tear**

**For all that's left of innocence  
That you chose to smear.**

**Preserve the drab and lifeless locks,  
But pause now and then,  
Sadly recalling the colorful ringlets  
She wore back when.**

SIFROY: Genevieve dead! Who would believe it would come to this? Perhaps I was overly harsh.

CHARLES MARTEL: Friend, you have my sympathy.

SIFROY: (*quickly recovering*) Then allow me to return your hospitality. It is time that I go home. Tomorrow night I shall be dining in my palace at Ham-on-Rye. You are all invited to join me for a house party. (*to Droган*) Hurry back. Order them to prepare rooms for forty guests. (*to Isoline*) I especially want you to be included. (*to Martel*) You and I will return as homecoming heroes from the war, The all-too-faithful servant who carried out my orders will be waiting-- conscientious old Golo!

ISOLINE: Golo! Why, he's the man I was talking about -- my husband!

SIFROY: Good God! Which means that the ridiculous duke, the gullible ass . . . oh, no!

ISOLINE: I couldn't think of attending your party! It would be too embarrassing.

DROGAN: (*aside, to Isoline*) Milady, I beg you. Please reconsider. Your presence is of the utmost importance. It could be crucial. The future of an innocent lady and an entire Dukedom is at stake.

ISOLINE: If that is the case, how can I say no? Duke, on second thought, I am happy to accept your kind invitation. (Embarrassing perhaps, but it will not be without interest.)

## **FINALE TUTTI**

**So come along, my friends,  
Have a mad, merry fling, etc.**

**End of Act Two**

## ACT THREE

In stark contrast to this decadent scene, we return to the woods, where Genevieve and Brigitte have settled down to a life of rustic austerity in a conveniently located cave. Not exactly a chateau, but it will do for the time being. They are sharing it with a wounded fawn that Genevieve has adopted, and from whom she seems to have picked up a new slant on life.

*Scene: A forest clearing in front of a cave opening.*

BRIGITTE: As if we didn't have trouble enough! And you have to bring home a wounded fawn. One more mouth to feed.

GENEVIEVE: She earns what little we have to offer. She keeps me company.

BRIGITTE: Sparkling conversation, I'm sure.

GENEVIEVE: She's taught me a lot. Who needs words? After all, we have a good deal in common. For many years, I too was a captive fawn – sheltered, pampered, petted, yet helpless and unhappy. But little fawns grow up, and learn to forage for themselves . . .

### XXIII. SONG OF THE FAWN.

GENEVIEVE: **You may want to keep a dainty fawn  
To call your very own,  
So you pamper, preen and pet her  
Like a queen upon a throne.**

**However compliant she appears to be,  
She longs most of all to roam at large and free.  
Caress her, be nice to her, but some fine day  
You'll find that your darling  
Has scampered away.**

**Though you try your best to please her,  
She's a creature of the wild,  
A rebellious child imprisoned,  
Not inclined to be beguiled.**

*(with Brigitte)* **However compliant she appears to be,**

**She longs most of all to roam at large and free.  
Caress her, be nice to her, but some fine day  
You'll find that your darling  
Is far, far away.**

*Drogan enters.*

GENEVIEVE: *(with more than a hint of passion)* Dear Drogan! Thank God you're still alive! I knew that I could count on you.

DROGAN! Ladies! I saw the Duke, who will be passing by shortly. But Golo is still on the prowl, and up to his old tricks. His hunting party is also headed this way. Quick! You must not be seen yet! I'll try to steer them away. *(He takes them into the cave, then joins the approaching hunting party.)*

#### **XXIV. THE HUNTING CHORUS**

**We rise at dawn,  
Led by the sound of the horn.  
The chase goes on,  
Bounding through thicket and thorn.**

**Fox and deer,  
You fox and deer, take warning!  
All's fair game  
When we take aim.**

**With sound of the horn we greet the morning;  
Through forest and field we stalk the prey.  
You vigilant fox and deer, take warning!  
Stay clear of the hunter hard at play.**

**Through field and forest, huntsmen all,  
Follow the call:  
Follow!**

GOLO: An entire morning wasted! Not even one measly little rabbit! And time is getting short. At exactly two forty-five the ceremony begins, leading up to the grand climax, when you will have the honor of placing on my head the official cap that confirms my new title: Duke Golo.

VANDERPROUT: Poor Sifroy! Killed while defending the faith. A tragic loss.

GOLO: Right! Stick to that line. I am counting on a flawless performance.

No unforeseen mishaps, understand?

VANDERPROUT: (*wearily*) I'll do my best.

DROGAN: Hunters, away! (*He leads them off*)

(*Sifroy and Charles Martel enter, in Turkish garb.*)

## XXV. THE FABRICATED JOURNEY

**SIFROY:**

**Returning from Tur --  
From fighting in Tur --  
The tough terrain of Turkey,  
The moral is mur --  
Amusing but mur --  
To say the least is murky.**

**Better to claim, to claim, to claim  
A fight for fame and glory.  
Better to lie, deny, deny  
The true but shameful story.**

**Completing the jour --  
The jubilant jour --  
The fabricated journey,  
I'll need an attor --  
A testy attor --  
A sly and slick attorney.**

**Better to claim, to claim, to claim  
A fight for fame and glory.  
Better to lie, deny, deny  
The true but shameful story.**

SIFROY: Ah, what a relief to be back on home turf, among my faithful flock, where I am so well known and beloved. I can already picture their innocent delight at seeing me again. And what a fabulous story we have to tell -- hair-raising, if not quite accurate.

MARTEL: Ferocious fighting in Turkey, two months in captivity, locked up in a dungeon, narrow escape, disguised as Turks, tramping across the whole of Europe on foot. We'll be the heroes of the day!

SIFROY: And these gorgeous, exotic clothes! Like a masquerade party. Ah, here come two of my devoted subjects, the armed police that I am so proud of. Watch

their faces light up when they see me. (*Garbage and Pitou enter humming a tune*)  
What ho, my happy underlings! A pleasure to see you on the job, carrying out my orders on this bright sunny morning.

PITOU: Who does this guy think he is, the king o' spades?

GARBAGE: Under things, indeed!

PITOU: I don't like the look of his pal neither. Foreigners if you ask me.

GARBAGE: Obviously. Let's have a look at your papers.

SIFROY: Papers? What the devil are you talking about?

PITOU: You heard him, knucklehead. Hand over them papers.

SIFROY: Me, carry papers? A little respect, you varlets! I am Duke Sifroy!

PITOU: So you're the Duke? Ha, ha, ha! Howdy, I'm St. Peter.

MARTEL: Glad to see them so overjoyed at seeing you.

GARBAGE: Sir, I am no starlet! We happen to know that the Duke was bumped off -- if I may employ the expression -- in Palestine.

SIFROY: You mean to say he's dead?

PITOU: Bumped off. Ain't that clear enough? Mowed down. Rubbed out.

GARBAGE: Consequentially -- and I hope you'll follow my logistics closely -- if you are not dead, you can't be the Duke. And if you *are* the Duke, you must be dead.

PITOU: So what's the idea, barging in, trying to take over? We know what's going on. You're an imposter!

GARBAGE: And a proven mythological liar. Pitou, you are brilliant. They both look highly auspicious.

PITOU: Let's nab 'em.

GARBAGE: Take 'em in for further interrocution. We'll get 'em talkin' or my name's not George W. Garbage.

PITOU: We got plenty of ways to do that..

GARBAGE: You two are under arrest.

MARTEL: This is an outrage! Never in the history of man . . .

PITOU: Can it, buster. You can do your talking in a nice, cozy dungeon cell.

SIFROY: Is there no one who can clear up this preposterous blunder and tell these moronic ruffians who I am?

*(Drogan enters, with Genevieve and Brigitte)*

DROGAN: Here's someone who can do exactly that. Genevieve, your wife. Remember?

SIFROY: But Genevieve is dead! That lock of gray hair . . . Good heavens! It's a ghost coming back to haunt me!

BRIGITTE: Look at her, sir. A bit the worse for wear, after being exposed to the elements for a few months, but very much alive.

GENEVIEVE: Your wife indeed. Your innocent, slandered, persecuted wife.

DROGAN: Whom I rescued from the foul hands of Golo.

GARBAGE: It's beginning to look like we've made a little mistake. Because, the way I see it, if she is his wife, he must be the Duke. Pitou, you are an idiot.

PITOU: Garbage, you oughta be sent to the dump. *(They slink out)*

SIFROY: And Drogan back as well. My, my! One surprise after another.

DROGAN: He comes for one purpose alone: to tell you that your wife is entirely innocent of the charges against her.

SIFROY: Your word is good enough for me, and I am delighted to hear it. Frankly, it's been weighing on my mind. So now that the unfortunate misunderstanding is cleared up, welcome home again, all of you. I daresay you're exhausted. *(magnanimously)* I'm willing to forget all the wrongs I've done you and we'll let bygones be bygones.

GENEVIEVE: Not yet! Sir, I can and perhaps will forgive you. But not until you have paid the price for your cruelty and injustice.

SIFROY: Price? What kind of money are you talking about?

GENEVIEVE: It has nothing to do with money. But I doubt that you want

the public to know where and how you have been spending the past few months while your soldiers were fighting and dying in Palestine.

DROGAN: And unless you wish to be hanged for treason, you will agree to have your marriage annulled and hand over your title and official prerogatives to the wife you have so grossly wronged.

SIFROY: (*with outraged dignity*) Sir, this is blackmail!

DROGAN: Why, yes, I believe it is.

SIFROY: I am absolutely appalled that an honest looking fellow like yourself would stoop so low. Give up my wife?

DROGAN: Unless you prefer the alternative . . .

SIFROY: Did you say hanging?

DROGAN: I said hanging.

SIFROY: On the other hand, if I am no longer Duke, I won't have to give anymore public speeches . . . no more briefings to wade through. Hm! (*A look of ineffable joy spreads slowly over his face.*) All considered, your terms are not . . . unreasonable.

GENEVIEVE: They are what is sometimes known as justice.

SIFROY: Now, now, my dear. I can see in retrospect that I was harsh and possibly unfair. But I was upset -- understandably upset, as any husband would be.

GENEVIEVE: And so, on the flimsiest evidence, you ordered me beheaded and cast into the sea.

SIFROY: I went too far, I admit it. But look at it this way: the severity of the sentence only proves how much I love you. What more could a wife ask for?

GENEVIEVE: Someone whose love includes trust and respect. Someone whom she in turn can trust and respect. Do not mistake me for the meek, helpless, self-effacing nincompoop that I used to be. Meet the new woman!

SIFROY: Undeserving as I am, let me embrace the new woman. (*He does so*)

VANDERPROUT: (*entering*) Genevieve, in the arms of a Turk!

GENEVIEVE: Look closer. In the arms of my former husband . . . And now free to marry the man of my own choosing.

VANDERPROUT: The Duke! Oh, sir, forgive me. But you have come in the nick of time. Golo is about to be named your successor. He has done you great wrong, and I have been his unwilling accomplice. And to my eternal shame, it is I who am to place the official cap on his head in less than an hour.

DROGAN: That will not happen, trust me. I have a plan. But you must stall for time, spin out the ceremony while I pull the pieces together. Wait for my signal. *(He hurries out)*

SIFROY: What a capable young man! I'm more than happy to let him handle it. You know, my dear, you might consider marrying *him*.

GENEVIEVE: The thought has in fact crossed my mind. And we would be ever so pleased to name you the godfather of our first child.

SIFROY: To the palace! *(Exeunt all)*

We are in the grand hall of the Ducal palace where a crowd is assembled and Golo, so close to the fulfillment of his grandiose dream, is waiting impatiently to be confirmed Duke, as Vanderprout tries valiantly to stall for time.

*Scene: The grand hall of the Ducal palace where a crowd is assembled and Golo is waiting impatiently to be confirmed Duke, as Vanderprout tries valiantly to stall for time.*

**CROWD:**           **Though in the same proud martial strain,  
                          Today we sound no battle cry,  
                          But wish instead a productive reign  
                          For the new Duke of Ham-on-Rye,**

**A reign serene and splendid  
                          Where strife and strain are mended  
                          By the new Duke of Ham-on-Rye.**

**Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah  
                          For the new Duke of Ham-on-Rye!**

CROWD: Long live Golo!

GOLO: *(to Vanderprout)* Why the devil is this taking so long? How much time do you need to put a cap on my head?

VANDERPROUT: But we mustn't compromise the solemnity of the occasion by rushing. (Still no signal from Drogan.)

GOLO: I say get on with it!

VANDERPROUT: (Two forty-five -- well, I suppose I must.) Fellow citizens! On the head of the worthiest among us, I am about to definitively place -- to place definitively the official cap of our beloved Ham-on-Rye, still mourning the grievous loss of our valiant late sovereign, Duke Sifroy, who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country, and in so doing . . .

GOLO: (*interrupting*) Yes, yes. And not to keep you in suspense, I feel honored to accept. If anyone dares boast of a stronger claim to the title, let him step forward. I welcome the challenge. No answer? Let us proceed.

SIFROY: (*entering*) Stop! Here's your answer!

CROWD: Sifroy! The Duke! He's alive! Thank God!

GOLO: An imposter! An impersonator!

SIFROY: An imposter, am I? (*Sound of a tom-tom*)

VANDERPROUT: At last, the signal!

,,,,,(*Disguised as the hermit, Drogan enters, followed by Genevieve, Brigitte, Garbage, Pitou and Isolene.*)

GOLO: The hermit of the ravine!

CROWD: The hermit!

DROGAN: (*pointing to Golo*) Did I hear something about an imposter? There he is! Not only an imposter, but a ruthless criminal! Behold his victims.

## XXVII. J'ACCUSE!

**DROGAN:**                   **Mastermind of crimes unnumbered,  
                                  Contemplate them while you can,  
For your victims have but slumbered --  
                                  First, may I present Drogan?**  
*(casting off his hermit garb)*

**Monster, monster!**

**Along the way you dropped the ball.  
Tremble, tremble!  
Pride is followed by a fall.**

**Genevieve was not beheaded --  
Still alive to grace the scene.  
And Brigitte survived the dreaded  
Leap into the deep ravine.**

**GEN. & BRIG.**

**Monster, monster!  
For the moment standing tall.  
Tremble, tremble!  
Soon will Humpty-Dumpty fall.**

**DROGAN:**

**Left for dead, this gallant twosome  
Lay unconscious on the ground,  
But were spared a fate so gruesome --  
Call them merely lost and found.**

**GAR. & SP.**

**Monster, monster!  
Not so mighty after all.  
Tremble, tremble!  
Now your turn to take the fall.**

**DROGAN:**

**Justice and revenge at last  
For someone led along by lies!  
From the not too distant past  
Your wife perhaps you'll recognize,**

**ISOLINE:**

**Monster, monster!  
Wedding vows you may recall.  
Tremble, tremble!  
On deceit the axe will fall.**

SIFROY: There will be ample time later on to decide his punishment. I have an important announcement to make. So happy am I to have my beloved Genevieve home again, alive and well, that I am renouncing my title here and now and handing it over to her, your new Grand Duchess!

GENEVIEVE: Now free and independent, I shall do my utmost to serve you, in partnership with my indispensable Prime Minister -- brave, steadfast, ever faithful Drogan, to whom I owe my life, for which I mean to repay him --- in full!

GARBAGE: Ah, Pitou! Thanks to you and me, all has turned out well. The convicts have been dissolved, and we've brought things to a rousing collusion.

**TUTTI:**

**A joyful moment worth the wait!  
Genevieve home safe and sound.  
With open arms we gather round  
To raise a cheer and celebrate:  
Here's to Genevieve!  
Here's to Genevieve!**

**What a team! What a pair!  
Love will have the final say.  
Spring again in the air,  
What a way to end a play!  
For all,  
Happy days, happy days, happy days!**

**THE END**

